

MAGAZINE FOR THE WELLINGTON FILIPINO COMMUNITY

# KABAYAN

Autumn 2014 • Issue No. 5

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## Family Ties Bound by love



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# editorial

## Love changes everything

As we go through the articles of this issue we realised there is one recurring theme – love. We express our love in many different ways, on many different levels. We are not just talking about romantic love (Eros) but love that flows within our family and our communities. In this issue, we feature a Kiwi couple who adopted siblings Lyka and Santino from Calapan, Mindoro.

Theirs is a story of hope, love and compassion. I visited them at their home in Lower Hutt. Colleen and Lyka met me at the train station. Little Lyka was friendly and smiling, wearing her pretty skirt, umbrella and gumboots. When we got to their house, out of the blue I got a big hug from a younger child, Santino. His name means young saint and he is an adorable little saint.

With the introductions over, I sat down to talk with their parents Colleen and Craig while both kids were sitting on my lap. With my pad paper full of doodles, we started the interview. I kept thinking how lucky the kids were to have this family. But as I pondered on the whole situation I thought that Colleen and Craig were equally blessed to have the kids. Clearly they are the exception to the rule that you can't choose your family but there is a reason why fate brought them together.

But it is not only parental love that figures prominently in children's lives. In many Filipino families, grandparents and grandchildren share a special bond too. Our Young Once and Young Ones tandem stories tell us what this closeness means to them.

We also feature Mayie's amazing journey to Tacloban to help the kids recover from the trauma wrought by typhoon Haiyan. The thing is, she is not even from Tacloban yet she has chosen to travel and serve the needs of the kids there. If that isn't love, I don't know what is.

So if anyone were to ask me what I would wish for, I won't wish for world peace.

I'd wish for love because love changes everything.

**Meia**

## editorial box

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## Hits and misses:

**Hit:** Thanks for the wonderful feedback about the typhoon Haiyan stories.

**Miss:** We would like to acknowledge Eva Kaprinay and Bernie Velasco for the pictures on the typhoon Haiyan Street appeal and Bernie for the additional pictures used for the article on Dr Rico del Rosario in the Kabayan Summer 2013-2014 issue.



**Dream big, Start small.**

Let's build our Filipino Community Hall in Wellington! Support the FilCom Centre Project.

To help, go to the Bulwagan Foundation Trust website [www.bulwagan.org.nz](http://www.bulwagan.org.nz) and check out the different fundraising programs

*(Adopt a Brick, Alkansya and pledges).*



## Pasko A Filipino Christmas Festival

By: Bulwagan Foundation Trust

On 30 November 2013, the Filipino community celebrated the annual "PASKO - The Filipino Christmas Festival" at the Sacred Heart College in Lower Hutt. The Bulwagan Foundation Trust spearheaded the event in coordination with the Philippine Embassy and the different Wellington Filipino organisations. The Philippine Embassy staff, led by Ambassador Virginia H Benavidez, fully supported the event.

The full day event started with a mass, followed by a Pinoy Shoots session with Tab Baldwin, coach of the Hawkes Bay Hawks basketball team. The children at the festival participated in the parol-making workshop. Mylen Montoya won the individual category while Inag Alamani's family won the group category for the parol making contest. There were a number of food, arts and crafts stalls enjoyed by all the visitors.

This event was one of the activities supporting the Filipino Community Centre project in Wellington. In light of the recent events in the Philippines, part of the proceeds went to the relief efforts for the victims of typhoon Haiyan.

We hope that when somebody says "Pasko", people in NZ will know that it's a Filipino Christmas Festival. We are certainly looking forward to the next one!

Images from PASKO - The Filipino Christmas Festival – upholding traditions, developing friendships, and enjoying our cultural identity. Photos by: Bernie VImages



## Sinulog 2014

By: Meia Lopez



The Sinulog is an annual festival in honour of the Child Jesus (Sto Niño) and celebrated on the third Sunday of January. In the Philippines, the Sinulog festival is celebrated throughout the country but most notably in Cebu City, Maasin City, Southern Leyte, and Balingasag, Misamis Oriental. The Sto Niño relic at the Basilica Minore del Santo Niño in Cebu is believed to be the oldest Christian image in the Philippines, a gift from Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan to Raja Humabon's wife, Lady Humamay (see related story in Blast from the Past).

Similarly, the Wellington Filipino community celebrated the Sinulog Festival on 19 January 2014 at the St Bernard's Gym in Lower Hutt. The celebration kicked off with a procession of devotees dancing to the beat of the drums while carrying images of the Sto Niño into the gym. This was followed by a mass officiated by Fr Dennis Nacorda and Fr Bernard Holzer.

The celebration was organised by the Wellington Filipino Chaplaincy and the Mabuhay Association.



Sto Niño, Sto Niño, Salamat po sa tulong ninyo.  
Photos by Alan Raga

## Badminton, anyone?

By: Archie Araza

The Wellington Filipino Badminton Club (WFBC) held its first badminton tournament on 25 January 2014 in Lower Hutt. The tournament brought together a number of players from the different parts of Wellington, Lower Hutt, Upper Hutt, Porirua, Kapiti, Levin and even Palmerston North.

The Philippine Embassy donated the 26 medals awarded during the tournament. The Ambassador's Cup, donated by Ambassador Virginia H. Benavidez was presented to the group that won the most medals in the tournament. The first recipient of this trophy is the Wellington Filipino Badminton Club.

Zelati Gelato and Sorbet donated the Zelati Cup for the player of the tournament for every year starting from 2014. This year's Zelati cup was shared between between Mark Larangan and Angela Tuason.

It is the vision of the Wellington Filipino Badminton Club to reach out to all the Filipinos throughout New Zealand to participate in this annual family oriented sports event.



Fun and friendship, all in the spirit of great sportsmanship. Way to go Wellington! Photos by: Alan Raga



The British High Commissioner said that we "have small voices but our message is loud and clear." Photos by: Clark Figuracion

## International Women's Day

By: Kyla Tayawa-Villalba

(Kyla, 8 years old, is writing this article as part of her school challenge at St. Teresa's School, Karori)

Our group, *Munting Tinig*, performed at the International Women's Day event on Saturday, 8 March, at SHED 6. We performed two songs – Count and Me and *Munting Tinig*. There was another children's group, the Virtuoso Strings, a violinist group from Porirua that performed with us. My friend Briana Bonzon-Liu performed with them but also with *Munting Tinig*. We distributed pamphlets to all the guests present. My mum said that the pamphlets provide information on what we can do to make a difference in the lives of women and girls around the world.

It was fun performing at this event. There were a lot of people present. We met the British High Commissioner and the Mayor of Wellington. After our performance, many people approached us to say that we performed very well. The High Commissioner, who was also the MC for the event, mentioned that we "have small voices but our message is loud and clear".

The event was organised by the British High Commission, Wellington Women Walk for Peace, Wellington City Council and the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

## Wellington Soundcheck 2014 Music Outburst



Sixty one performers. Hundreds of cheering fans. One great night.

## Music is the outburst of the soul

By Carol Parreno

Wellington Soundcheck 2014 – Music Outburst, held at Sacred Heart College Lower Hutt on Sat 8 March 2014, was a true success story. What started as a music concert has morphed into a “Music Festival” with 61 performers. Bringing this event together for the second year was not an easy task for the producers Afterglow Arcade and jambln juaNZ.

What makes it distinct from other productions is that the producers are not only on stage to assist all performers as technicians for musical instruments, amps and monitors, lighting, projector and sound mixing but headline performers as well.

It was a challenge, but the focus was to provide a venue and opportunity for Filipinos in the Greater Wellington region to showcase their musical and artistic talents. Aside from Afterglow Arcade and jambln juaNZ, the other performers of the show were:

1. Rowena Echano
2. Foursies (band)
3. D'BAS
4. INCOMMON
5. Gerard Cabauatan
6. Sweet Serenade
7. Lyn and Peachy Bobis
8. Lia Quintans and Cedric Diputado
9. Paulo Canlas
10. Playback
11. Switchblade
12. Deadlifters
13. juan80
14. The Slur
15. The Velvet Regime

The place was packed with the best crowd ever - singing, dancing, cheering and applauding while having a grand time.

Wellington Soundcheck 2014 – a showcase of PINOY PRIDE!

## ASEAN NZ Business Council's Spotlight on the Philippines

By: David Catty

Two Ambassadors in one room was the highlight of the ASEAN NZ Business Council's first event for 2014 in Wellington on 27 February 2014.

Hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Council's Wellington team co-ordinated by Philippine and Wellington Chapter Member, Matilde Tayawa Figuracion, arranged for New Zealand's Ambassador based in Manila, HE Reuben Levermore, to address Wellington members at a Spotlight on Philippines event. He highlighted the rapid economic progress being made and the resultant opportunities for NZ exporters.

ANZBC was fortunate that Ambassador Virginia H Benavidez was able to attend the event so that Ambassador Levermore's presentation was nicely complemented by the words Ambassador Benavidez was able to add. She was especially thankful for the contribution Kiwis made to the typhoon recovery project, and afterwards, a lively humour-full question and discussion period. Over 40 guests attended including many Filipinos based in Wellington.

# A family to call their own

By Meia Lopez

.....

**Calapan, Oriental Mindoro is a long way from Lower Hutt. But that is the journey siblings Lyka and Santino made so that they too would have a family to call their own.**

.....

Craig works at the Regional Council while Colleen is a registered Early Childhood Teacher. A Christian Kiwi couple, Craig and Colleen Green have been thinking of starting their family. With no kids of their own and after exploring IVF treatment, they decided that adoption would be a good option for them.

In 2008, they started the adoption process from overseas and their country of choice was the Philippines. Colleen says, "Out of the countries we could choose from, we like the Filipinos we've met (at our church) and we are familiar with the culture and the fact that it is a largely Christian country. We also fitted the criteria (age) for the Philippines and we could adopt two children."

Finalising the adoption involved being approved by the Child Youth and Family (CYF), coordinating with ICANZ, the inter-country adoption board in New Zealand and ICAB, the inter-country adoption board counterpart in the Philippines. After many months, they were put in touch with Ruel Foundation, a Christian foundation that funds medical missions in Asia and an orphanage based in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.

Because they were allowed to adopt two kids, they were given information about siblings - Lyka and Santino. Lyka (the 'ate' or older sister) then a toddler, liked to spend her time playing with her friends. Her brother Santino, a mere baby then, showed signs of mild cerebral palsy<sup>1</sup>. Colleen and Craig knew that these were going to be their kids.

With the decision made, they started communicating with the kids long distance. In January 2012, they finally flew to the Philippines to meet Lyka (then nearly 4 years old) and Santino (two and a half years old). The anticipation gave way to excitement and apprehension as they came to the orphanage. Craig recounts, "You think 'Wow!' After waiting all those years and you are standing at the door, you meet the kids - it kinda



**Top: A family that's meant to be. Colleen, Lyka, Craig and Santino at home. Bottom pictures: First pictures together at the Ruel Foundation orphanage in Calapan, Oriental Mindoro.**

hits you a bit." The kid must have been similarly excited as they too have been preparing to meet their new parents. They have been given photos of and a few presents from Craig and Colleen in the past months. But the chatty Lyka was unusually quiet, eyeing the Kiwi couple carefully. Santino was much more obliging. Luckily, it didn't take long to get both kids warm up to them "I remember you swinging me," Lyka pipes in, talking to her mum.

A few days later they were on board another plane, this time on their way home as a family. They settled into a routine with Craig going to work and Colleen staying at home with the kids. "Things are coming along well now; Lyka has been at school almost a year and her confidence has grown immensely. She enjoys dancing and is with the Filifest Dance Group. It is lovely seeing her mix with Filipino people. She has made friends at school and she's generally

quite happy. Santino now goes to morning kiddy and the Wellington Early Intervention Trust (WEIT) to help with his speech. He has ways to communicate now so he is much happier."

Like any parent, they wish the best for their kids, for them to find the things they enjoy in life and to harness their skills. "To help along as best we can," Craig says. "And that they both continue their Christian walk as well," adds Colleen.

As they build stronger family ties here, Craig and Colleen also talk to the kids about their roots. Colleen relates, "We openly talk to them about where they are from. We try to cook some Filipino food, over time I would like to cook more. When they are older, we will take them back to the Philippines."

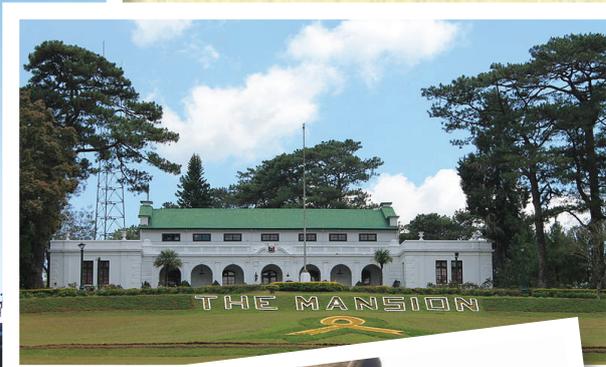
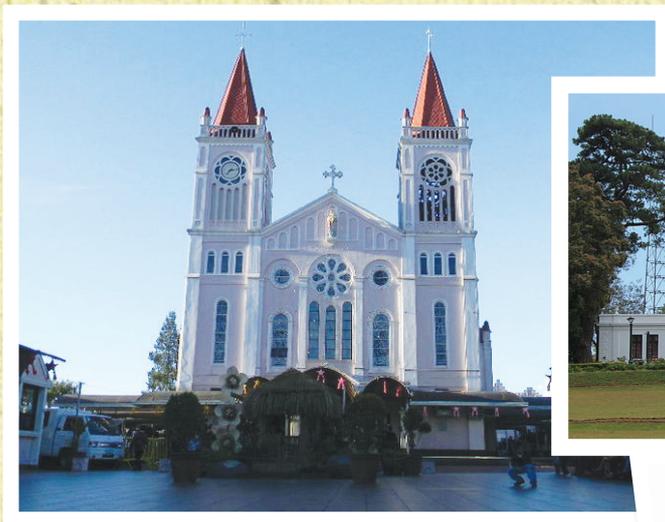
With such a young family, there will be more memories to share together. To Craig, Colleen, Lyka and Santino, welcome to the Filipino community!

<sup>1</sup>The term cerebral palsy refers to any one of a number of neurological disorders that appear in infancy or early childhood and permanently affect body movement and muscle coordination but don't worsen over time. Even though cerebral palsy affects muscle movement, it isn't caused by problems in the muscles or nerves. (<http://www.neurological.org.nz/disorders/cerebral-palsy>)

# BAGUIO CITY: SUMMER CAPITAL

By Matilde Tayawa-Figuracion

A POPULAR DESTINATION FOR TOURISTS – WHY IS IT THE SUMMER CAPITAL?



From left: The Baguio Cathedral – Our Lady of Atonement stands over the City of Pines.

The Mansion, official residence of the Philippine president in Baguio City.

Winding road, fresh crisp air, a snarling lion, yup you are nearly in Baguio City alright!

<http://visitpinas.com/baguio-trip-2008-travel-log-tourist-spots-and-shots/lion-head-on-the-way-to-baguio-city/>

"Summer capital of the Philippines", "fresh flowers from Dangwa", "fresh fruits and vegetables", "strawberries", "ube from Good Shepherd", "peanut brittle", "Burnham Park", "PMA Grounds", "City of Pines", "Camp John Hay", "Mines View Park", "Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto", "Cathedral", "Session Road", "Kennon Road", "Panagbenga Festival". If these were the descriptions used as clues in the popular Pinoy Henyo game, you bet that the answer would be a giveaway. The number of well-known destinations and landmarks associated with Baguio City is testament to the great array of activities available to enjoy and the number of places to explore as a visitor.

Baguio City was established by the Americans as a 'hill station' in 1900 at the site of an Ibaloi village known as 'Kafagway'. The name of the city is derived from the Ibaloi (indigenous language in the Benguet Region) word 'bagiw' which means 'moss'. This is because the city is situated at a high altitude (of approximately 1540 meters) in the Luzon tropical pine forests eco-region, which is conducive to the growth of mossy plants and orchids.

Because of its cool climate, Baguio City was designated by the Philippine Commission as the "Summer Capital" of the Philippines on 01 June 1903. A hundred years on, it still holds the same title. It is always

refreshing to walk along Session Road on the way to the market where Baguio vegetables are fresher and cheaper than what you'd get in Manila. For a bit of a challenge, climb the 100-plus steps from Session Road to the Baguio Cathedral, walk around Mines View and Burnham Parks and explore the recreational facilities at Camp John Hay.

Aside from tourism, which is one of the main drivers of its economy, Baguio City is also a destination of choice for higher learning. It has at least eight colleges and universities and a number of trade and technical schools. It is no wonder that almost half of the city's population are students, many of whom come from nearby provinces and numerous foreign students.

One of the attractiveness of Baguio City is its distance from the Philippine capital Manila. The Summer Capital of the Philippines is just 240-250 kms away. By private transport, the trip from Manila usually takes 4-5 hours during the day, and sometimes less at night. By bus, another convenient mode of transport to

Baguio City, the travel time takes a bit longer due to the many pre-arranged stopovers by the driver for passengers to buy food or *merienda*. The Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway (SCTEX), which was in full operation in 2008, is one of the best things to have happened for travellers to the City of Pines. It has cut travel time considerably.

But to me, the attractiveness of Baguio City, and the Cordillera Region, is its indigenous peoples and their very rich culture. As an indigenous person myself, and someone with a keen interest in indigenous peoples issues and concerns, I have high regard at their deep sense of cultural belonging. They have a genuine and strong motivation to preserve their cultural traditions no matter where they are in the globe (including New Zealand) and they are equally motivated to pass these beautiful traditions and cultures orally from one generation to the next. The Cordillera people have the strongest positions in terms of maintaining cultural integrity and holding on to their rights to ancestral lands and domains.

Baguio is a city where old traditions thrive, learning is paramount and the sites are a gift from nature.

# March 16, 1521

The discovery of the Philippines by the western world involved a courageous explorer, kings, rajahs, datos and a historic journey around the world.



Pictures from the pantomime during the Philippine Independence Day 2011 celebrations. Rowel Madrisa as Lapu-lapu, Steve Robertson as Ferdinand Magellan, Pat Salandanan as a Spanish priest, Clark Figuracion and Brent Lewis as Spanish soldiers. Photos by: Alan Raga

It was the 1500s, the age of exploration. Many people thought that the earth was flat so that to reach the Spice Islands (Moluccas in Indonesia) one must sail east from Europe. But Portuguese Ferdinand Magellan wanted to find another route - by sailing west from Europe, he would reach the Spice Islands and eventually get back to where he started. He wanted to debunk the current belief and circumnavigate the globe. Such radical thinking and expensive exploration did not interest Portuguese royalty so he went away and approached the Spanish King, Rey Carlos I (also known as Charles V).

Whether the king had a bigger sense of adventure, was out to stake a claim on uncharted lands or simply had deeper pockets to fund the expedition (or all three), we can never be sure but he agreed to fund Magellan's journey around the globe. So a Portuguese explorer sailed under the Spanish flag.

Here was the plan. With a *flotilla* of five ships (Concepcion, San Antonio, Santiago, Trinidad, and Victoria), Magellan set off from Spain on September 20, 1519 with 270 men. Italian Antonio Pigafetta signed up to record the historic journey.

Their journey was long and hard, with stories of mutiny, desertions and diseases. In the process, they lost a couple of ships and many men. Finally, on March 16 1521, they sighted the island of Samar (eastern Visayas). The next day, Magellan's ships landed on Homonhon Island in Samar where Magellan called the islands 'Archipelago de San Lazaro'.

They sailed to the neighbouring island of Limasawa (Butuan City) where the locals and their king, Rajah Kolambu received them warmly. It is said that this is where the first mass on Philippine soil (the exact location is still under debate ) was celebrated.

Magellan continued to sail and landed on the island of Sugbu (Cebu) where he befriended Rajah Humabon. Magellan convinced them to pledge allegiance to the Spanish king and later, Fr Pedro De Valderrama baptised Humabon, his wife and the locals into the Catholic faith. As a gift, the explorers gave a statue of the Child Jesus to Rajah Humabon's wife. This was how the devotion to the Sto Niño de Cebu started.

With reasons still unclear, whether Magellan was caught between warring Datus in Mactan and Cebu or Lapu-lapu saw through the outward expression of friendliness and had an inkling of foreign domination, no one can say. But barely six weeks of being in the islands, Magellan and his men fought against Lapu-lapu and his army. This is known as the Battle of Mactan . On April 27, 1521, Magellan died at the hands of Lapu-lapu and his men. Although Magellan never completed his mission to circumnavigate the globe, 18 of his men eventually did and returned to Spain on September 8, 1522.

**Postscript:**

Many other Spanish expeditions were sent to the Philippines in the following decades. The Spanish explorer Ruy Lopez de Villalobos named the islands (referring only to the islands of Leyte and Samar) Las Islas Filipinas (The Philippine Islands) in honour of the crown prince of Spain, Felipe (later Rey Felipe II). This eventually became the name of the entire archipelago.

**Notes:**

At that time, there was no concept of a united Philippine archipelago. There were however, many independent and thriving communities dotted throughout the islands, headed by Datus and Rajahs. (A rajah is the local king and a datu is a tribal chief.) These communities traded with Chinese and Arabs and so were probably used to seeing people from different races. Mactan is an island off the shores of Cebu.

**Sources:**

- [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_Spanish\\_monarchs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Spanish_monarchs)
- <http://www.biography.com/people/ferdinand-magellan-9395202>
- <http://geography.about.com/od/historyofgeography/a/magellan.htm>

# Unraveling the Mysteries of Light:

## Kris Ancog and his creative journey

By Celeste Valera



When I first saw his paintings, all I said was, "WOW! I'm going to share these!"

Kris Ancog is an emerging Filipino artist based in Wellington. He builds thin layers of paints on big canvases whilst incorporating textures to gradually reveal the scenes he calls "dreamscapes." His artworks depict carefully blended colours of tranquil landscapes that sometimes bring back good old memories.

"I've been doing creative stuff since I was a kid but only picked up my brush 5 years ago," says Kris, who is originally from Bohol and works as a full-time ICU nurse. "I remember my humble beginnings. I bought this little canvas and a set of acrylic paint from a 2-dollar shop. At that time I was struggling with my technique and oftentimes overwhelmed with frustrations. But I never quit because I am passionate about what I was doing. Patience, diligence and perseverance really pay off when you're trying to achieve your dreams."

As a result, Kris decided to study Diploma of Art and Creativity at The Learning Connexion International Art School in Taita, Lower Hutt and is soon to finish it. He is currently working on his painting series called *Mysteria Lucis* (Mysteries of Light).

I've had a chance to interview him, so here are a few nuggets he can share with budding artists:

### How do you see yourself as an artist?

I call myself a creative soul – an artist born with an insatiable sense of wonder and who never ceases to explore beauty that brings us into an experience of peace and serenity. In my paintings, I aim to capture that very thing that opens our hearts and makes us understand the untold yet familiar stories from the forms created by the brushstrokes and layers of colours.

### From where do you get your inspiration?

I get it from anything that captures my eyes and moves my heart. But I do get it mostly from nature as I believe it is a gift to us. I tend to draw inspiration from the soft morning light, the quiet reflections of the setting sun and the movement of clouds that come and go right before my eyes.



Kris Ancog, "a creative soul" *Mysteria Lucis*: A sample of his work exhibited recently at the Thistle Hall Gallery on Cuba Street.

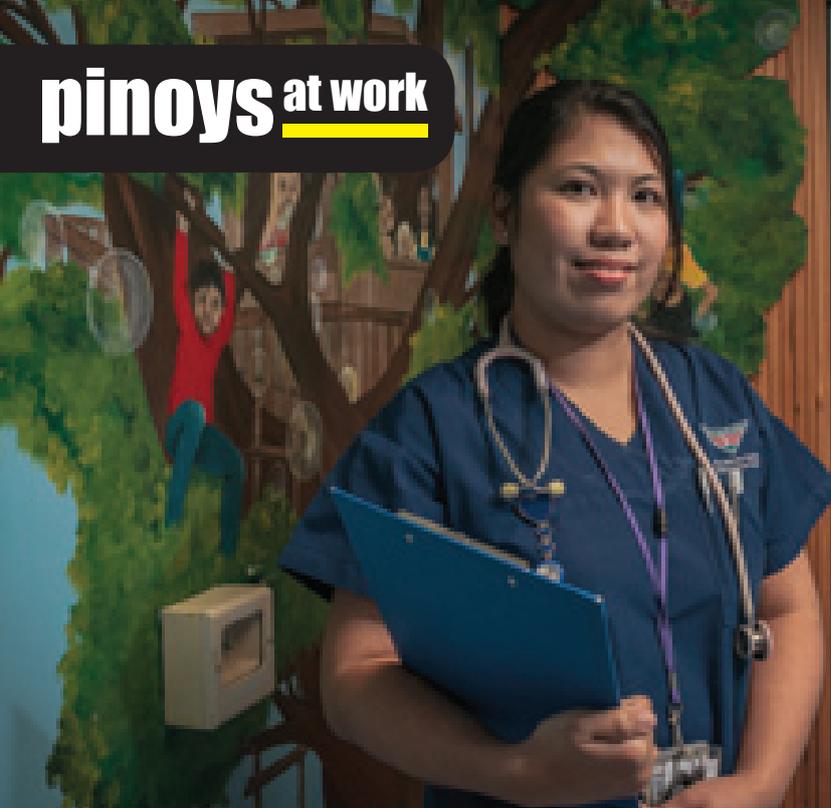
### How do you manage to juggle your full time work, post grad study, art school, church and social life?

A lot of people ask me if I ever sleep (Laughs). Yes, I do. I guess it's about constantly reminding myself of why I am doing this. I believe that part of my life's purpose is to celebrate human connections. Art is my special way of connecting with people, sharing with them my experience, memories, perceptions and even my own story that we all have in common yet are beyond words and almost unfathomable.

I love painting and being creative. When you love something, you make the time for it regardless of your responsibilities.

### Tell me more about *Mysteria Lucis*.

*Mysteria Lucis* is a series of oil paintings inspired by the light we perceive in nature from sunrise to sunset. It portrays my attempt to capture the mystery and beauty of soft and colourful lights that grab our attention and give us a contemplative experience. My aim here is to tell those stories we keep in the crevices of our hearts – unspoken yet gently reminding us of our dreams and longing to embrace the largeness of life.



Left: Competent, compassionate and cool, Kristel is ready to go to the paediatric ward.

Right: "Come on, I'm just checking your heartbeat."

Photos by: Bernie Velasco



## LOVE FOR CHILDREN, LOVE FOR NZ

By Noel Bautista

A Filipino nurse at your service,  
anytime, anywhere

In the last few years, so many things have happened to our *kabayan*, nurse Kristel Sevilla, that one might be led to think that she has led the adventures of half a lifetime. But this twentysomething has not even begun to live her multi-faceted life, and indeed, so soon after only her second anniversary as a Kiwi-Pinoy.

Before we continue with her tale, we must tell you that aside from being a paediatric nurse at the Hutt Hospital, Kristel is an active member of the Pinoy Catholic community of Paraparaumu, volunteers for the *Munting Bayanihan* Dance Ministry (also in Paraparaumu), is currently a servant leader in the Wellington Filipino Chaplaincy, and sings soprano in the Wellington Filipino Community Choir. If you think saying that was quite a mouthful, then try actually doing those things, which Kristel does with as much commitment as a barangay captain, religious sister or professional singer.

But she didn't plan to wear so many hats in her dream job overseas. In fact, our *kabayan* didn't even intend to point at New Zealand on the spinning globe. Out of the possible work destinations for an experienced Pinay nurse (nearly limitless, actually), Kristel narrowed in down to the United Kingdom and NZ. New Zealand was a recent choice given the obvious advantages (healthy environment, English speaking and immigrant friendly), but Middle Earth offered an intriguing option: devoid of any Kristel's friends and family, she saw the country as the best opportunity to sharpen her skills at independence.

Her resourcefulness was tested even before she arrived on Middle Earth's shores. On the longest leg of her journey here, Kristel's skills as a medical professional were put to the test by a fellow passenger who was suffering blinding pain from somewhere in his abdomen. Intuitively drawing on her knowledge and experience, our *kabayan* heroine suspected liver-related issues and made sure her suspicions were relayed to the airline's doctor on the ground. For her grace under pressure, Kristel earned the thanks and gratitude not only from her co-traveller but the airline as well. This, even before she practiced a single day of nursing in New Zealand.

There were a few months of loneliness and adjustment. But anywhere there are *kabayan*, there are churches, and where there are churches there are church groups. Back home, Kristel was hardly a joiner but like most of us, she was raised to be a devoted member of the Catholic Church. In no time, Kristel found herself serving in multiple capacities in different Catholic organisations, and the loneliness turned into a flurry of service and activity.

Beyond all of these, nothing is more important to Kristel than taking care of recovering children in one of the busiest hospitals in New Zealand. More than the precious dollars and peer recognition that many of us aspire for, it's the intangibles that make Kristel's day. It's no surprise that patients send a personal message of thanks to Kristel.

She also takes pride in the fact that more than one child in the paediatric ward has named her favourite doll after her. It doesn't take too much to conclude, the parents say, that the favourite doll is named after the favourite nurse.

And any time Kristel is a child's favourite nurse, it makes her day.

# Life of a Filipino Grandma in New Zealand

By: Honorata de Leon Mandilag



"Naynay" with her grandkids Marielle, Art, Sam and Nico

*Grandparents play an important role in their grandchildren's lives.*

Five years ago, at the age of 72, I started a new journey in life here in New Zealand. I was uncertain of what my life would be like when I agreed to come and be with my family. However, I was excited at the thought of spending the remaining days of my life with them.

I found life in New Zealand generally peaceful and stress free. I had been so used to the chaotic traffic and hectic schedule back home, that I welcomed this newfound serenity immediately.

I indulged in different activities to occupy myself such as gardening and beading. I made new friends and attended the Tawa Home League meetings of the Salvation Army. I joined the Pilipino Kapatiran Prayer Group and an NGO called Action for Environment.

However, my main objective was to help my children in any way I could. I felt that I could help relieve some of the pressures in their busy lives by looking after my grandchildren. I have four grandchildren, three of whom are grown-up and one still in primary

school. Even the grown up ones still need their grandma for some of their basic necessities. This is very fine with me.

My bedroom usually gets cramped when they all descend on my bed. Their excited chatter and energy have always been a joy to me. I help them with their homework and before retiring at night, I tell them bedtime stories about Filipino legends and folklore. I enjoy spending time with my grandchildren as these times are the most priceless of all. I get to be a part of their life achievements and be there to cheer them on when they are down.

I eagerly look forward to walking my grandson to school and picking him up in the afternoon. He is ravenous after school so we usually go straight to the mall to get a snack or two. When they get together, they take turns in describing their school activities complete with gestures and laughter. This is the ultimate reason why I am here. To behold these moments with my

grandchildren, especially the youngest who is growing up so quickly before my eyes.

I try to instil in them the Filipino customs and traditions like the kissing of the hands of elder people to show respect and saying 'po' or 'opo' when talking with older people. These are very basic Filipino traditions that are rooted on our love and respect for elders for which we are known.

Despite the differences in lifestyle and culture, I consider myself lucky to be in this country. I have no regrets giving up everything in the Philippines because had I not come sooner, I would have lost the opportunity to enjoy my grandchildren's childhood days.

To sum it all up, I quote Gene Perret who once said, "What a bargain grandchildren are! I give them my loose change, and they give me a million dollars' worth of pleasure." My children and grandchildren indeed, give me so much more!

# “The Ties that Bind”: My grandparents and I

By: Kaela Tirados

Confidante, advisors and mentors, Kaela reflects on her relationship with her grandparents.



Everything's all right with Kaela with Lola Mel.



Kaela with Lolo Rod and Lolo Guding.

“Love is the greatest gift one generation can give to another”  
– Richard Garret

“Surely two of the most satisfying experiences in life must be those of being a grandchild or a grandparent” – Donald A Norberg

A relationship between a grandchild and a grandparent is truly one of a kind. Grandparents watch their grandchildren the moment they were born, when they grow up, until they have their own children. They love their grandchildren so much and play various roles. As the grandchildren start walking and talking, their grandparents become their greatest playmates, answer their questions over and over again, and become their greatest confidantes, “partners in crime,” role models and mentors.

Grandparents are some of the most important people in our lives as they help in shaping us to be who we are today whether through their unconditional love for us or the values they pass down to us. As Filipinos, our grandparents teach us our Filipino traditions, values and cultural beliefs so we can practise them in our lives and share them with the next generation.

To me, one of the best relationships I have is with my grandparents. Ever since I can remember, my grandparents have always been there for me. When we were still in the

Philippines my favourite memories with my grandpa were those of picking me up from school, treating me to ice cream, playing sports with me, lifting me onto his feet and dancing with me.

I also became close to my grandma especially when she moved with us to New Zealand. While growing up I became close to her not only because she was my only grandparent here but also because she was my roommate. She became someone I could talk to as she also confided in me. She would share her stories and experiences with me about her life. I was always interested in her stories as they revealed different lifestyles from ours now. Until now, she is my “partner in crime,” someone who I can laugh with until we both cry, someone who taught me how to look after myself, someone who taught me to be selfless and to treat someone as if s/he is a member of our family.

I can truly say my grandma is my role model and my inspiration. She is someone in my life I truly cherish and love. She is one of the people who has helped me become who I am today and who I want to be.

Having her (and of course, my grandpa) in my life is the best thing that I have and treasure. *Maraming salamat po lolo at lola sa tulong at patnubay ninyo* (Thank you lolo and lola for your help and guidance).

Moving on. Helping the young survivors deal with the trauma wrought by typhoon Haiyan.

samu't sari

by Mayie Pagalilauan

# A Special Journey to Typhoon Haiyan's Ground Zero

On the 7th and 8th of January 2014, exactly two months after Typhoon Haiyan/Yolanda wreaked havoc in the Philippines, I visited San Jose, Tacloban City to conduct an informal trauma debrief activity for the children of Brgy. 5. The objective of the debrief activity was to provide the children with an opportunity to express their trauma, their thoughts and feelings after the devastating typhoon brought big changes in their lives. The activity consisted of story-telling, singing, dancing, drawing and painting. The highlight was the art therapy session where the children communicated their experiences through drawing. By creating art, the children were able to release their repressed emotions which could help them change their outlook in life.

The children were very keen to share their stories and were very thankful that someone was willing to listen to them. Their stories are heart wrenching, such as shown by the drawing of Janelle Boco, an eight year old girl. "Nung bagyo po, nandun kami sa simbahan. Ang daming tao. Punung-puno. Umakyat kami sa taas. Abot sa tuhod ang tubig. Tapos sa labas po ang daming taong lumulutang. Sana hindi na bumalik ang bagyo kasi nakakatakot po. Ayaw ko na ng malakas na ulan at hangin." (We were in the church during the typhoon. There were lots of people in the church and the water was up to our knees so we went upstairs. Outside, there were many (dead) people floating on the water. I wish we'd never have typhoons anymore. It was scary. I don't like the strong rain and wind.) One child even shared that they left their sick granddad on the first level of their house as they scampered for safety on the rooftop when storms waves surged in.

Despite the difficult situation that the children and adults are experiencing they are still full of hope. They are very thankful for all the support that people around the world are showing them. One parent said, "pakisabi sa mga taga-New Zealand, maraming salamat sa pag-alala sa amin kahit na nasa malayo na kayo. Ang mga taong tulad ninyo ang

Ma. Cathelyn G. Babante

"Maraming"  
Salamat  
Sa pagtulong  
nagkaroun kaming  
mga Bata namay  
Pagasa



*nagbibigay sa amin ng pag-asa para bumangon ulit.*" (please tell New Zealanders, thank you very much for remembering us even from far away. You give us hope to get back on our feet.) This sentiment also resonated in the children's drawings.

## My Trip to Tacloban: A Story of People Wanting to Reach Out

My trip back home to the Philippines was unexpected. All I had was a motivation to help through fundraising activities here in New Zealand. Never had I imagined that the simple gesture of organising volunteers for the New Zealand Red Cross Appeal for Typhoon Haiyan collection here at Paraparaumu last November would lead to a bigger undertaking for me. One parent from the preschool where I teach, who volunteered for the Red Cross appeal, gifted me a return ticket to the Philippines via her airpoints because she recognised my desire to be with the survivors. How blessed can I be? The unexpected generosity of this person allowed me to visit Typhoon Haiyan's Ground Zero and do the trauma debrief activity. Not only that - it was the catalyst that triggered a big chain effect of selfless acts and compassion among the circles I move in. A lot of people rallied on for the trauma debrief project. What I planned to be a quiet personal journey ended up as a story of friends, families, and communities helping one another make a gargantuan undertaking become effortless. They offered their prayers, well wishes, and groups of friends even surprised me with different independent fundraisers to finance the logistics of doing a trauma debrief.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone, some of you I don't know personally, who supported me along the way. With all your support and belief in me I never felt burdened by this undertaking; instead, I was just challenged to do more and to do better than my best. You all played a big part in this act so I can play my role as an instrument to bring God's love to the children and their families. You took my mission as yours as well. May we continue to be a blessing to one another all the time as God has been continually blessing us day by day. I will be forever grateful to you all. This is your story, too, not mine alone.

*Maraming salamat* for allowing me to weave our stories into one great story that highlights humanity at its best!

## Do you want to help?

Our story should not end there. Our *kababayans* still need our support. Their road to recovery has a long way to go so let us continue to support them in any way we can. Parents, maybe you can encourage your children to send messages/letters of hope and encouragement to various schools in the devastated areas where children can read them. This will be a big morale booster for the children who are traumatized by the devastation.

The feelings are still raw and the memories remain, yet there is a glimmer of hope. We wish them healing and peace of mind.

# Surviving in the corporate world

By: Megan Diputado

## So you've finished university. What's next?

It's been more than two years since I left the halls of my university to enter the 'corporate world'. I remember staring at one of my student loan mails one afternoon, thinking that I desperately need to get a job to start paying off that substantial amount owing in my account. Well I guess I was just really blessed and lucky at the same time that things turned out exactly how I hoped for. I got the 'dream' job I wanted at that time – an entry-level role for a giant IT firm, and it was almost straight after I completed my degree.

I got into the Graduate Programme where fresh graduates get rotated into different areas of the business for two years, before they decide which permanent role they want to do afterwards. To me, this idea sounded absolutely perfect, especially since I had yet to determine where I wanted to specialise in the vast IT industry.

It didn't take long for me to fall in love with my work and the lifestyle that came along with it. When I found out that I'll be spending my first week at work in Sydney, with all expenses paid, I already knew I was going to have the time of my life. Outside work was also fantastic. I loved the office hours and the idea of not having to think of work after 'clocking-out'. This new lifestyle has also given me more time to attend to my leisure activities like sports, or even to find new hobbies like going to the gym. And of course the best part of it all – earning real money! Who am I kidding, that was the ultimate dream – to finally pay off my student loan, and buy those lavish things that I can only really admire through a window shop back when I was still a student.

However, it also didn't take too long for me to start hitting the walls and seeing the challenges of working full-time. My enthusiasm for work gradually waned as my job started to become routine. Getting out of bed early wasn't as easy anymore. Colleagues started to become frustrating and intimidating. Work deliverables became more pressing and stressful. All of a sudden, I found myself missing my old student life where I was young(er) and carefree, with very little and trivial responsibilities to worry about.

Of course it was foolish to actually want to go back to my student days. Working in the real world may be daunting at times, especially when I have to deal directly with clients. But it has taught me many invaluable life lessons – some of which, I've learned the hard way.

One of these is the importance of being proactive. I've learned that we should not wait around for people to tell us what to do.

Sometimes we have to find out ourselves what needs to be done. I've also learned how to take ownership of my own work and development, and to drive myself to take on new challenges and initiatives. Working with a wide variety of individuals has also taught me how to deal with people of different temperaments and personalities.

Today, I am now working as a Transformation Consultant for the same company, after having finished my Grad Program. There have been struggles along the way, but for the most part, it has been a truly amazing journey. I guess what really helped me along the way, and which is perhaps the most important lesson I've learned thus far, is how to stay positive in whatever circumstance I'm faced with. I'm sure that there will be more and harder challenges to come. But with the experiences I've had, I'm confident that the journey ahead would be even more exciting.



Cruising Sydney Harbour

**"When I found out that I'll be spending my first week at work in Sydney, with all expenses paid, I already knew I was going to have the time of my life."**

**Top: Megan in front, with the grey bag and wearing a black dress.**

**Bottom: Megan sitting, second from the right.**

# You have dirt on your forehead

By: Rev. Fr. Elmer I. Ibarra, SVD, Parish Priest  
St. Patrick's Wainuiomata

## Lenten Reflection 2014

You just came back from the Ash Wednesday mass at your local parish church. Then you go to your work and a colleague notices the ash on your forehead. He politely says, "Hi Evelyn, I think there's some dirt on your forehead, do you want a tissue to remove it? "How would you reply?

In the Philippines, everybody knows that it is Ash Wednesday and mark of ashes on your forehead is well understood by those who see it, even non-Catholics. However, we live in New Zealand where there is only a small percentage of Catholics and Anglicans (Yes, Anglicans also have services for imposition of Ashes during Ash Wednesday) in the population. So most probably, everyone you meet on that day would be a bit worried about that dirt on your forehead because they have no idea what Ash Wednesday is all about.

This is one of the realities of living in New Zealand.

So the question is, how can we be an effective witness of our faith in this very secular society? Lent is an opportunity to live out our Christian Faith and with this, is an opportunity to evangelise or at least inform other people of what we believe in.

Our officemates and friends may notice us abstaining from meat on Fridays and eating fish instead, or fasting on Ash Wednesday. Of course, we can politely say that we are trying to lose weight or we love eating fish on Fridays. But it is more pleasing to say the real reason why we are sacrificing from eating meat or fasting. We are preparing ourselves spiritually and physically for the commemoration of the resurrection of Christ at Easter.

If we were in the Philippines, there is usually a sense of understanding and even some peer pressure to do fasting and abstinence. These are after all engrained in our culture. For us who are living in New Zealand, it is also another chance to look deep inside ourselves to understand why we fast and abstain from meat.

We need to discover and reflect on why we do what we do. When we understand the reason behind, these acts become less of a ritual and more of a personal expression of our Christian faith. When we teach our children, especially if they have been living in New Zealand for a long time or they have been born here, we must explain the real reason why we do these Lenten observances.

As we are in another Lenten season in New Zealand, let us challenge ourselves to rediscover our Lenten observances and traditions. These are the things that make us Catholic, draw us closer to Jesus and make our Christian lives even more meaningful.



*"Ashes are not a sign of death, but a promise of life." Fr. Thomas Merton.*

Fr Verghese imposing ashes at the St Andrew's parish, Newlands.

# BE MY VALENTINE

There are many ways we have seen Valentine's Day celebrated. There's the quiet dinner at home, the overnight stay at a fancy hotel, the flowers, chocolates and little trinkets. And who remembers the singing telegrams in the 80s? Maybe you'd rather forget.

Is Valentine's only for the young or is it for the young at heart? We asked some friends and here's what they said.

## WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT VALENTINE'S DAY?

**Flora –**

You don't have to prove that you love each other. It's not limited to a day. It's too commercialised.



**Kristel –**

Giving. It's better to pay forward your love to someone rather than receive it. It's more rewarding.



**Oda –**

Filipinos don't limit themselves to celebrating it with their special someone. They share it with their family and friends.



**Liz –**

Valentine's Day is a good day to reminisce how we met. It used to be just us (my husband and I) but the kids are part of it now.



**Judith –**

At my age, it means a once a year kilig to the bones celebration!:-)



**Manny –**

Valentine's Day means EXPENSES! Hahaha

**Kathy –**

It means I get random flowers from salesmen as I walk to school.



**Dinna –**

Valentine's Day means that roses that were \$5.00 yesterday are now \$15. Racket namin nung high school - we would make Valentine cards and sell them to our classmates.



**"Girlie"**

When I was working in Manila before, the husbands would order flowers and have them delivered to their wives' office. If my husband hasn't sent me anything when everyone else has received flowers, I used to call him and ask him for mine. Hahaha

**"Boy"**

It is the only day in a year that I don't buy flowers! (I buy it the day before he he)

# Kaldereta

By: Ethel Verano

Photo by: Clark Figuracion



Editor's Note: Kaldereta is a stew using beef, chicken, pork or goat, this dish is a Filipino favourite. Its origin is unclear but it most probably came about as a variation to the Spanish Caldereta de Cordero<sup>2</sup>. The name kaldereta comes from the Spanish word, caldero, meaning cauldron or cooking pot.

While there are ready made mixes available now, it is always a good idea to start from scratch..

## INGREDIENTS:

500 grams beef brisket or pork ribs	1 tablespoon sweet pickles
1 tablespoon tomato paste	2 potatoes cut in cubes
1 cup tomato sauce/ketchup	2 carrots cut in cubes
¼ cup soy sauce	dried chilly (optional)
1 can liver spread	salt/pepper/garlic/onions
¼ cup cheddar cheese	

## PROCEDURE:

1. First marinate meat in soy sauce and tomato sauce/Ketchup with bit of garlic and black pepper for an hour or two.
2. In a large pan, sauté garlic and onion then add a tablespoon of tomato paste.
3. Put the marinated meat and leave it to simmer for 15-20 minutes.
4. Add a cup of water when needed to soften the meat.
5. When it boils, add the liver spread, cheddar cheese and a tablespoon of sweet pickles
6. Add a pinch of salt to taste (depende sa iyong panlasa)
7. Let it simmer in medium heat until the sauce thickens
8. When meat is almost tender, add the potatoes and carrots
9. When cooked, serve in a big bowl and ENJOY eating while it's hot!

<sup>2</sup> <http://spanishfood.about.com/od/maincourses/r/lambcasserole.htm>

Hey kids! Colour in this picture!

Illustration by: Mike Javier





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## upcoming events

### The Color Run

Are you ready for the craziest, very colourful, 5k of your life? Come and join us as Color Run comes to Wellington.

We have created a team called “#COLOUR RUN FOR LILAH & CR”.

Let us support Lilah Encarnado and Cristina Torres and their families. The personal challenges which Lilah and Cristina have gone through are enough to inspire and fuel us to walk/run/crawl/dance/roll/hop in this year's Color Run.

Join us and help put smile on Lilah and Cristina's faces.

Color Run will be on Sunday, 30 March 2014. Registration is open now.

**If you haven't registered yet, you can register and join the team here:**

<https://endurancecui.active.com/event-reg/select-race?e=5276702&i=91174ad7-698a-44b7-abe9-bc7572858ad5>

**If you've already registered, you can join the team here:**

<https://myevents.active.com/>

**You can also find more information at the event website:**

<http://www.active.com/upper-hutt-nz/running/races/the-color-run-wellington-2014>

*Looking forward to having you join us!*

### Laughing out Loud New Zealand Tour 2014

They are back!

Wellington: Saturday, 5 April 2014

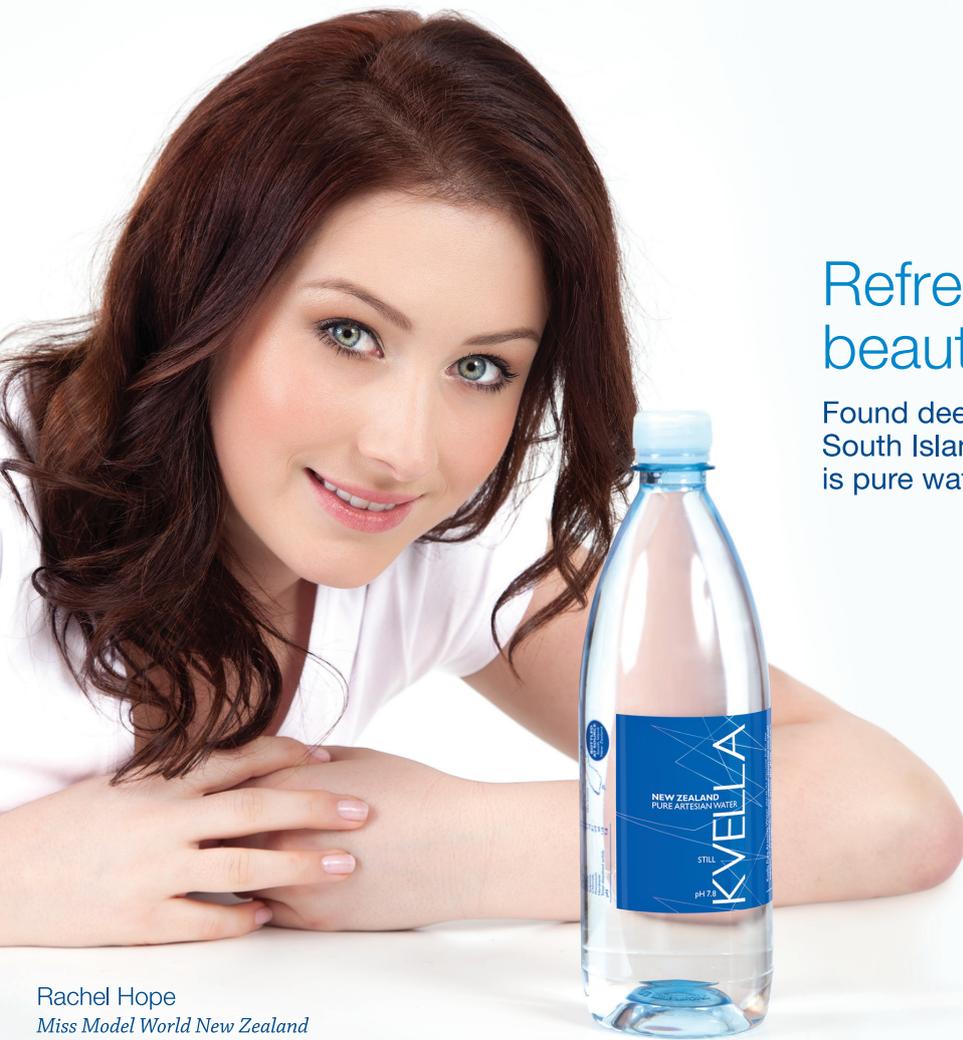
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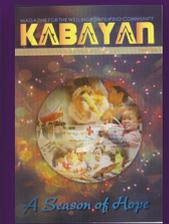
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# Unang Taon

Kabayan is now one year old.

Thanks to all our contributors and featured kababayan!



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## Competition winners

Noel Villegas – for naming our magazine • RL Ubaldo – Florante at Laura crossword puzzle

## Some of our favourite lines ...

I always thought Luisa and Carding looked good together in real life as much as they did on TV. **Annie Robrigado**

TGIF – Today God is First. **Kaela Tirados and Joanna Viernes**

The war weary soldiers trudged along the dusty roads in the height of summer. Physically weak and emotionally beaten, these men walked from sun up to sun down with hardly any food or drink. **Meia Lopez**

A great picture must begin its life as a vision in your mind. **Chryseis Santos and Bernie Velasco**

During the sccond wave, everyone was swept away and sucked out through the roofless house ... my uncle was the only survivor. **Jasmine Alcazar**

Sadly, we sometimes take the heroism of ordinary people for granted and prefer to be dazzled by the drama and explosions and the larger than life heroics of a superhero. **Brent Bautista**

Can he contentedly eat this nilaga or sinigang without sawsawan and rice to go with it? Hmmm ...definitely not. **Judith Salamat**

One thing that was imprinted in my mind was the 'Honesty Shop', an unmanned store on the other side of the town. **Matilde Tayawa-Figuracion**

That day, the embassy turned back the hands of time. We were all kids for a day. **Teodoro Helbano**

Unlike many Pinoy migrant couples embarking on the New Zealand magical mystery tour, Lower Hutt couple Ramil and Marie Garcia knew exactly what they were getting into. **Noel Bautista**

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